

# **Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC) Town Hall Meeting March 16, 2018**

Delaware School for the Deaf  
630 E. Chestnut Hill Road  
Newark, DE 19713

Mr. Kevin McAllister welcomed everyone to the 2018 Town Hall Meeting. Mr. McAllister also stated that the Vocational Rehabilitation Council has vacancies and is looking for members. Mr. McAllister stated the purpose of the Town Hall Meeting is to determine barriers blocking positive employment outcomes in terms of:

- Employment and Employment Opportunities
- Education & Training
- Orientation and Mobility
- Business Enterprise
- Networking, Advocacy and Council Opportunities

## **Introductions:**

Kevin McAllister, Chair, Suzanne Howell, Vice Chair, Darryl Garner, Member, Blake Roberts, Representative from CAP, Jacqueline Poquette, Member, Pat Burrell, non-voting member, Elisha Jenkins, non-voting member, not present Sonya Lawrence.

## **Elisha Jenkins, Director of Division for the Visually Impaired introduced the Division for the Visually Impaired**

Provided an update on agency priorities and activities since the implementation of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act.

## **Mr. McAllister used the following topics to obtain feedback from the audience:**

Employment and employment opportunities for successful employment & employment opportunities, the following are needed:

- Reasonable accommodations.
- Drive and Motivation.
- Training.
- Assistive Technology – Apple products available for training.

- Division for the Visually Impaired AT Team provide training on the latest technology.
- Resume writing, job search, dressing for success.
- Disclosing your disability.
- Confidence and ability to sell oneself.

## **Some education and training recommendations and comments were:**

- Workshops should be statewide.
- Preparing individuals at all ages to be prepared to work.
- Skill level needs to be relevant to the times. (For example, computer skills are relevant skill for today's workplace.
- AARP & Senior Centers are good resources for individuals that are senior seeking employment.
- Design thinking is key to future positive employment outcomes
- Workshops on a variety of topics such as organization, presenting one's best self at work, etc.
- Provide weekend and evening workshops.
- Making audio/video recordings of workshops and making them available to consumers.
- Some Robo-calls have had incorrect information in the past. Some people don't like the robo-call voice.
- Increase the number of Assistive Technology Trainers to serve the entire Visually Impaired Community.
- Increase Job Readiness education and training.
- Increase information workshops, guest speakers, formal conferences, trainings and education services.
- Tailor training to develop soft skills, problem solving and real world scenarios as a foundation to employment.
- Training in resume writing and formatting.
- Offer workshops on practical applications for Apple products
- Resumes today are being scanned by computers and discarded if the computer doesn't see the specific text and format. Consumers need to be trained how to capture their information in this format to be selected for job interviews.
- Future Town Hall Meetings should invite participants to attend by video conference.
- Public transportation was discussed. For example: one consumer pointed out that a new application is being developed to help visually impaired community by announcing bus stops as they travel and which stop is upcoming.
- Increase outreach to doctors to inform their visually impaired patients about the Division for the Visually Impaired services.
- Self-defense and safety training is needed.
- Blind Entrepreneurs Program (BEP) Program starts with VR Counselor - Consumers can work with counselor to get business plan written.

## **Networking, Advocacy, and Council Opportunities:**

- Community was encouraged to join the council and get involved.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC) has relationships with legislators and Corporations.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC) is looking for people with passion to make a difference in the community.
- Consumer Satisfaction Needs Assessment (CSNA) Survey is requesting feedback from the community to determine the Visually Impaired communities' needs.
- In future Town Halls we need to look at the previous Town Hall to determine if actions were taken and recommendations were heard.

## **Comments from the Division for the Visually Impaired staff:**

- On even years Division for the Visually Impaired holds a technology fair which attracts large corporations and exposed the community to new technology.
- There is an upcoming workshop with DART. If consumers provide questions the Division for the Visually Impaired will ask on their behalf.
- Any visually impaired person should contact Helen Harper-Elzey in central intake to connect with our services. Ms. Harper-Elzey can help consumer navigate services provided by the Division for the Visually Impaired at 302 255-9800.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am

# **Vocational Rehabilitation Council (VRAC) Retreat**

**March 16, 2018**

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Newark, DE 19713

## **Overview**

- The council met to continue its 2018 VRAC retreat. The Chair welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda.

## **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment**

- The Social Services Senior Administrator presented on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, CSNA. She provided an update on the status of the CSNA. Several stake holders, consumers and other groups have participated in surveys, focus groups and various other feedback methods to gather data for the CSNA. The team is still in the process of collecting data. As soon as the process is completed the draft CSNA will be circulated.

## **A Day in the Life of a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor**

- A Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor presented on the “Day and Life of a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor”. She provided an overview of the Division for the Visually Impaired, Vocational Rehabilitation consumer track from referral to exit.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Outcomes and Pre-ETS Services**

- The Vocational Rehabilitation, District Administrator presented on employment outcomes and Pre-Employment Transition Service strategies.

### **State Plan**

- The discussion continued on the State Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm

# **Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**March 17, 2018**

**9:00 am to 2:00 pm**

**Herman Holloway Campus Chapel**

**1901 N. DuPont Highway  
New Castle, DE 19720**

### **Call to Order:**

Mr. Kevin McAllister called the meeting to order at 9:30 am

### **Roll Call:**

Kevin McAllister, Chair, Suzanne Howell, Vice Chair, Jacqueline Poquette, Member, Sonya Lawrence, Member, Blake Edwards, Member, Darryl Garner, Member (teleconference), Deb Bradl, Division for the Visually Impaired, Elisha Jenkins, Division for the Visually Impaired (teleconference), Grisel Espinosa, Division for the Visually Impaired, Lisa Edmondson, Division for the Visually Impaired

### **State Plan:**

- The draft State Plan was reviewed. The draft Performance Measures are:

Goal 1: Increase the Quality of employment outcomes, and Quantity of Employment Outcomes by 15% annually each fiscal year from the prior completed fiscal year.

Performance Measure 1.1: Increase successful closures each Program Year levels by 15% in each subsequent program year for this state plan.

Performance Measure 1.1a: 90% of DVI consumers shall maintain employment at two quarters following exit from the VR program.

Performance Measure 1.1b: 80% of DVI consumers shall maintain employment at four quarters following exit from the VR program.

Performance Measure 1.2: Demonstrate business partnerships through at least five new employer partnerships annually, whereby DVI consumers are employed within each program year.

Performance Measure 1.3: DVI consumers shall obtain a minimum median earnings level of \$11.00 per hour at two quarters following exit from the VR program.

Performance Measure 1.4: DVI shall continue a “business champions” program to highlight the successful partnerships established between the agency and local businesses offered. Business Champions activities will occur at least bi-annually throughout the state.

Performance Measure 1.5: To encourage entrepreneurial opportunities under the Randolph Sheppard Act, the Division for the Visually Impaired will bi-annually host Business Enterprise Program Orientation events to provide an overview of the program, pre-requisites, and the personal experiences of current blind operators.

Goal 2: Review, evaluate and implement improvements to Transition Services.

Performance Measure 2.1: Continue to implement program, policies, and procedures with 90% of potentially eligible students with disabilities being served under pre–employment transition services.

Performance Measure 2.2: Continue to use the Visually Impaired Client Registry, and the September 30th Student Count to validate the identity and school enrollment status and location of all transition–aged youth eligible for transition services by October 1st of each year.

Performance Measure 2.3: Continue to enhance transition model for services by, which includes direct coordination with DVI’s education program and independent living services unit in establishing agency protocol for the provision of services under the expanded core curriculum, as well as incorporating the use of customized employment by all DVI team members for individuals with significant disabilities who would benefit from this service delivery strategy.

Performance Measure 2.4: DVI will execute the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Delaware Department of Education, which details the roles and responsibilities of: (i) DVI staff; (ii) local education agencies; (iii) general VR transition personnel; (iv) and the Department of Education in providing transition–related services to students who are blind and visually impaired. DVI will distribute informational materials for staff use while working in the school districts.

Performance Measure 2.5: Continue to ensure that 100% of students that are expected to graduate within the next four school years are provided the opportunity and support to enroll in DVI VR services no later than September 1 of each program year.

Performance Measure 2.6: Evaluate the current level of exposure to AT that transition students currently receive and ensure that 100% of students are referred for AT evaluations related to AT that is consistent to their IPE goals.

Performance Measure 2.7: DVI shall develop and provide internships, short term employment, apprenticeships, and fellowships to 100% of all students enrolled in DVI's transition program prior to graduation from high school.

Goal 3: Improve Marketing and Outreach to Potentially Eligible DVI Consumers.

Performance Measure 3.1: DVI will focus outreach efforts on the Delaware Medical Community with targeted outreach materials.

Performance Measure 3.2: DVI will continue to revise and publish a newsletter that includes updated information on the agency along with links to social media for the agency.

Goal 4: Develop Innovation and Expansion Activities.

Performance Measure 4.1: DVI will offer on-going professional development for all DVI staff in the foundations of eye conditions, eye anatomy, sensitivity training, accommodations, assistive technology, effective case management, organizational skills, and time management.

Performance Measure 4.2: Increase pool of service providers each program year statewide. All new providers shall offer specific industry focused training programs that are in high demand within the Delaware labor market pool, developed in coordination with local employers.

Goal 5: Consistently provide a high level of consumer satisfaction

Performance Measure 5.1: DVI will continue to share consumer satisfaction survey data every other month with the State Rehabilitation Council.

Performance Measure 5.2: Conduct a Town Hall Meeting annually in coordination with the State Rehabilitation Council.

Performance Measure 5.3: DVI will enhance opportunities for self-advocacy skills development through hosting or collaborating with community partners on a quarterly basis. The Council will provide their recommended changes by March 20, 2018 for submission.

Advocacy and Activities:

- Joint Finance Committee Hearing is an opportunity for the Council to provide testimony.
- May is Healthy Vision Month – Activities in the past included an informational table at Dover Days and special events throughout the month.



## **Network & Recruitment:**

- The Council discussed opportunities for the Council to be engaged. Ideas should be shared with the Chair.